

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing and reconsideration of the subject application are respectfully requested in light of the amendments above and the comments which follow.

As correctly noted in the Office Action Summary, claims 1-16 were pending, with claims 10-16 withdrawn from consideration following a Restriction Requirement. By the present response, claims 2-6 and 8-9 have been amended, claims 1, 7 and 10-16 canceled, and claims 17-40 have been added. Thus, upon entry of the present response, claims 2-6, 8-9 and 17-40 remain pending and await further consideration on the merits.

Support for the foregoing amendments can be found, for example, in at least the following locations in the original disclosure: the original claims and the specification, pages 6-7.

RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT

Applicants hereby confirm the provisional election of Group I, claims 1-9, directed to an article. Election is made without traverse. The withdrawn claims have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer and Applicants reserve the right to file one or more divisional applications directed to the non-elected subject matter.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1, 2, 4 and 6-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Nos. 5,618,625 and 5,660,881 to Okamura (hereafter "*Okamura '625* and *Okamura '881*") on the grounds set forth in paragraph 7 of the

Official Action. The rejection is moot and should be withdrawn because 1) claims 1 and 7 have been canceled; and 2) all of the remaining rejected claims now depend directly or indirectly on objected to but allowable claims 3 and 9, which have been rewritten in independent form.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicants note with appreciation the indication that claims 3, 5, and 9 contain allowable subject matter if rewritten in independent form, as noted in paragraph 8 of the Official Action. By the present response, claims 3 and 9 have been rewritten in independent form to place them in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, further and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner feel that any issues remain, it is requested that the undersigned be contacted so that any such issues may be adequately addressed and prosecution of the instant application expedited.

Respectfully submitted,

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